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INFLUENCE OF NORMATIVE INSTITUTIONS OF HANDBALL FOR COACHES' LEARNING: STANDPOINT OF SAO PAULO STATE COACHES

La influencia de las instituciones normativas del balonmano para el aprendizaje de los entrenadores: punto de vista de entrenadores del estado de São Paulo

Influência das instituições normativas do handebol para a aprendizagem dos treinadores: ponto de vista de treinadores do estado de São Paulo

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Abstract

The Brazilian Handball Confederation (CBHb) and the Sao Paulo State Handball Federation (FPHb) are Institutions with the responsibility to organize handball in National and State level, respectively. Knowing their roles, the objective of this work was to analyze the relation between these Institutions and the coaches professional learning. Twenty two coaches from two biggest leagues of Sao Paulo State were interviewed. Their speeches were transcribed *verbatim* and analyzed based on the Collective Subject Discourse method. Coaches reported the distancing between those Institutions and their professional learning, as well the discontinuity and decontextualization of different activities (as courses, clinics workshops). We conclude that those Institutions are not effective to coaches professional learning.

Keywords: Coaching; Sport coach; Professional learning; Handball.

Resumen

La Confederación Brasileña de Balonmano (CBHb) y la Federación Paulista de Balonmano (FPHb) son instituciones responsables de la gestión del balonmano a nivel Nacional y del Estado, respectivamente. Conociendo el papel de éstas, el objetivo de esta investigación fue analizar la relación entre esas instituciones y el aprendizaje profesional de los entrenadores. Se entrevistó a 22 entrenadores de las dos mayores ligas de balonmano del Estado de São Paulo y los testimonios fueron transcritos y analizados con base en el método del Discurso del Sujeto Colectivo. Se notó un distanciamiento entre las instituciones y los entrenadores, la discontinuidad y la descontextualización de diferentes acciones promovidas. Se concluye que las instituciones no ejecutan de forma efectiva el papel de auxiliar en el desarrollo profesional de los entrenadores.

Palabras-clave: Coaching; Entrenadores; Aprendizaje profesional; Balonmano.

Resumo

A Confederação Brasileira de Handebol (CBHb) e a Federação Paulista de Handebol (FPHb) são instituições responsáveis por gerenciar o handebol em nível Nacional e Estadual, respectivamente. Sabendo do papel destas, o objetivo desta pesquisa foi analisar a relação entre essas instituições e o aprendizado profissional dos treinadores. Foram entrevistados 22 treinadores das duas maiores ligas de handebol do Estado de São Paulo e os depoimentos foram transcritos e analisados com base no método do Discurso do Sujeito Coletivo. Notou-se um distanciamiento entre as instituições e os treinadores, assim como o difícil acesso, a descontinuidade e a descontextualização de diferentes ações promovidas. Conclui-se que as instituições não executam de forma efetiva o papel de auxiliar no desenvolvimento profissional dos treinadores.

Palavras-chave: Coaching; Treinadores esportivos; Aprendizagem profissional; Handebol.

Introduction

Coaches' professional learning is influenced by different experiences, which occurs in many learning contexts and with the interaction between different protagonists (Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014). It is a complex process that requires the development of many competencies (Werthner & Trudel, 2006) and is influenced by formal, non-formal and informal contexts (Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2006).

The formal learning context is characterized by educational processes with a structured curriculum and a validated certification, for example, the university graduation (license and bachelor degrees) and the large-scale coach certification programmes, structured in the different levels. The non-formal context involves courses, workshops, short term conferences for a particular subgroup of a population who are interested in a specific task. The informal context, there is a search for the knowledge without a certification and/or systematization, which are referred to their previous experiences, interactions with other protagonists and coaches reflections.

In Brazil some Institutions has specific functions in the professional development. Universities are responsible for initial graduation (Federal Law 9696/1998 - Brasil, 1998) and, although generalists, gives a framework of knowledge from different areas. In the handball case, after academic degree coaches deepen their knowledge in non-formal (with short term courses) and informal contexts (from experiences as coach and athlete, conversations with other coaches and websites, for example).

Many authors present criticism of formal coaching education programs, mainly for not attend the specifics work environment (Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014; Werthner & Trudel, 2006). In the other hand, increases the understanding that professional learning occurs significantly with interaction with other coaches, when sharing experiences that seem to be more significant (Feu Molina, Ibáñez Godoy, Lorenzo Calvo, Jiménez Saiz, & Cañadas Alonso, 2012; Silva & Mesquita, 2016; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014).

Musa, Modolo, Barreira, Tsuji, & Menezes (2017) interviewed coaches from Sao Paulo State (Brazil), and points out that Institutions like Brazilian Handball Confederation (CBHb - responsible for regulating handball in Brazilian territory) (CBHb, 2016) and the Sao Paulo State Handball Federation (FPHb - that regulates handball in Sao Paulo State) (FPHb, 2015)¹ do not develop professional learning programs. These Institutions offer some isolated initiatives, which are criticized by the coaches for being few opportunities, with high cost and directed at a restricted group of coaches.

Considering the need for professional development of coaches after the University, as well as the roles attributed to CBHb and FPHb (administration and organization of handball in Federal and State spheres, respectively), the objective of this work was to verify coaches' opinions about the role of these institutions for their learning and professional development.

Methods

Twenty-two coaches of the two main Handball Leagues of Sao Paulo State (Brazil) were interviewed (Table 1). It is a state that the team has expressive results in the Brazilian scenario (Menezes, Marques, & Morato, 2016). The inclusion criterion was: coaching one or more male and/or female under-12 (U-12), under-14 (U-14), under-16 (U-16) and under-18 (U-18) teams. Coaches signed an Informed Consent Term, approved by the Research Ethics Committee.

¹ In Brazil, there are 27 Handball Federations (26 states and 1 from the Federal District), which are responsible for promoting, managing, organizing, directing and inspecting the handball in each State. All of them are affiliated to the CBHb.

Table 1. Characterization of interviewed coaches

Team Gender	Coach	Age	Teams	Years (College)	XP as coach (years)	Coach in school? (Y/N)	XP as coach in school (years)
Male	S1M	29	Male: U-12/U-14/U-16/U-18	8	5	Y	3
	S2M	38	Male: U-16	5	5	N	-
	S3M	31	Male: U-16	10	9	N	-
	S4M	34	Male: U-12	4	1	Y	1
	S5M	26	Male: U-14/U-16	6	5	Y	5
	S6M	45	Male: U-18	14	21	Y	12
	S7M	46	Male: U-16/U-18	18	20	Y	2
	S8M	45	Male: U-12/U-14/U-16/U-18	22	20	N	-
Both	S1A	46	Male: U-14/U-16/ U-18 Female: U-12/U-14	23	21	Y	14
	S2A	55	Male: U-12/U-14/U-16/U-18 Female: U-12/U-14/U-16/U-18	34	24	Y	5
	S3A	54	Male: U-12/U-14/U-16/U-18 Female: U-14/U-16/U-18	32	23	N	-
	S4A	44	Male: U-12/U-14/U-16/U-18 Female: U-12/U-14/U-16/U-18	22	21	N	-
	S5A	53	Male: U-12/U-14/U-16 Female: U-12	28	18	Y	13
	S6A	39	Male: U-16 Female: U-16/U-18	17	15	Y	3
Female	S1F	41	Female: U-16/U-18	20	19	Y	3
	S2F	45	Female: U-16/U-18	11	18	N	-
	S3F	26	Female: U-12/ U-14	4	3	N	-
	S4F	40	Female: U-14	27	20	Y	10
	S5F	34	Female: U-14/U-16	13	15	Y	15
	S6F	35	Female: U-16	15	11	N	-
	S7F	36	Female: U-18	16	14	Y	4
	S8F	53	Female: U-14	27	23	Y	15
Mean ± sd		40,7 ± 8,8		17,1 ± 9,1	15 ± 7,3	Y: 14 / N: 8	7,5 ± 5,3

Qualitative research was chosen to know the diversity of coaches' perspectives, considering the subjectivity of their speeches. For data production the semi-structured interview was used, justified by the freedom given to the researcher to develop and explore the proposed theme (Marconi & Lakatos, 2011).

The central theme referred to the support and investment of the Institutions that organizes the handball in the National and State level to coaches formation, and the interview was based on the follow guiding questions: "How do you see the relationship between coaches' professional learning and the role of FPHb/CBHb?"; "How do these institutions contribute to your professional learning?".

The recordings were transcribed *verbatim* and for the analysis of coaches' speeches the Collective Subject Discourse method (CSD) was used. CSD is based on discursive questions, which produce the information referred to the thoughts and the opinions about a specific theme (Lefèvre & Lefèvre, 2012).

CSD expresses the thought of a collectivity from the aggregation of continuous and/or discontinuous sections of the individual discourses, maintaining the coherence and the constitution of each of the parts that compose it. Speeches were analyzed from the following methodological figures: central ideas (CI - reliable and objective description of the meaning of a discourse on a thematic); key expressions (KE - literal transcriptions of continuous or discontinuous parts of speech, revealing its essence); and the CSD (speech-synthesis developed from KE of same CI) (Lefèvre & Lefèvre, 2012).

Results

Although some coaches mentioned that they already participated in courses a long time ago, there are some important critics to the Institutions: few activities for professional development and the distance between the Institutions and the environments of handball development (like town teams and/or regional league matches). In Table 2 we present the CSD1: "Institutions do not contribute to my professional development", and the origin of speech is represented in an overwritten form.

Table 2. Coaches' discourse about the non-contribution of the Institutions

CSD1: Institutions do not contribute	CBHb and FPHb are far away ^{S2A,S6A} , and do not exist any contribution of them to my professional development ^{S2M,S3M,S6M,S1A,S2A,S4A,S5A,S6A,S1F,S2F,S5F,S6F,S7F} . We do not have any courses organized by them and neither big incentives in the principal city or in the inner of State ^{S3M} to coaches ^{S3M,S5M,S3A,S5A,S6A,S1F,S2F,S3F} and athletes learning ^{S1F,S2F} . If you do not invest in coaches, you do not develop good athletes ^{S2F} . When I need to know about something I have to search, because they do not provide any material for study ^{S2M} . All I did is because I searched and invested in myself ^{S5F} . CBHb and FPHb do not have any relation with us when you talk about coaches' development ^{S3A,S4A} . FPHb offers only courses for referees, do not have coaches courses, and we have to search in others places ^{S5M,S3A,S6A} , and nothing is free to their affiliates ^{S7F} . When they offer any course, there is nothing relevant ^{S6A} , it is restricted to higher levels coaches ^{S1M,S6A} , are usually paid, and depends on the financial condition and coaches' initiative ^{S2M,S7F} . Coaches search for knowledge outside the court and in other places, because it is not offered any opportunities ^{S2F} .
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In Table 3 we present the CSD2: "Activities that could be created or improved by these institutions", where coaches points out some activities that could be made by both Institutions to provide professional development, and to enable the establishment of guidelines to different teams.

Table 3. Suggested activities to CBHb and FPHb to coaches' formation

CSD2: Activities that could be created or improved by these institutions	I think that they can contribute more with coaches' development, so the handball could grow and have more teams playing ^{S1M} . They should be organizing more competitions where they could select some players; nowadays there are no state teams ^{S1F,S2F} , neither regional ^{S2F} , it is just focused in the adult teams ^{S1F} . They have to offer more courses ^{S1M,S2A,S3A,S1F,S2F,S5F} , events ^{S1M,S2F} , workshops ^{S1M} to contribute to coaches development ^{S1M,S2A,S2F} . Should have a qualifying test to be coach, with different levels, as in Europe ^{S3A} . I have participated in the first attempt to a 'formal coaching education program' event, it had a symposium about handball; then it was made some workshops with some invited coaches and teachers, that was very restricted from the rest of the country ^{S7F} . CBHb have a project called 'mini-hand', where they donate some materials and a didactic handout, but learning is self-oriented; there is no course with some days with theory and practice ^{S5M} . CBHb also promote 'campings', but is just to see the athletes from all states, and not for coaches development ^{S6M,S2F} . For me, FPHb offered more courses and brought more international coaches a long time ago (2001-02), and then do not brought anything else ^{S3A} . There was only a goalkeepers' course that I went, the rest that I know do not have many things ^{S3F} . There is no technical direction that is concerned with an idea of initiation and players development ^{S1A} .
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Discussion

In this research we analyzed the role of CBHb and FPHb for the professional development of the interviewed trainers and the findings showed that the two Institutions have little or no contribution in this regard. DSC1 reports that there are no activities mainly related to non-formal and informal learning contexts such as courses, workshops and study materials.

These findings show coaches' interest in continuous learning about handball, to apply new concepts to their teams. However, the limited offer of knowledge sources limits the basis of their practice to content from the formal context (higher education) and / or the informal context (practices as an athlete). The results agree with the findings of (Musa et al., 2017), for which most of the coaches reported that they did not have any support from these institutions for their learning process.

Another aspect addressed in CSD1 refers to the encouragement of FPHb for the learning of coaches who work in the capital and inner cities of the State. The lack of interest of this institution can directly influence the development of players and the performance of their teams. In this sense, it is agreed with Cushion, Armour, & Jones (2003) that coaches' learning is an important aspect to improve sports performance, as was the case of the interviewees. It is expected that there will be an improvement in the performance of the teams from the coaches' learning, mainly from activities directly related to their training environment.

In CSD1 it is evident the coaches' standpoint regarding the distancing of these Institutions when considering their formative role, with few activities in the non-formal and informal contexts. Although the importance of some activities of CBHb (such as 'mini-handball' and the 'camps' - mentioned in CSD2) and of the FPHb (such as occasional courses) coaches criticized the absence of policies for professional development. This criticism is due to the fact that the relevant aspects for coaches professional development are not defined, making it impossible to create courses or even to systematize some learning strategies (Feu Molina, Ibáñez Godoy, & Gozalo Delgado, 2010).

It is insufficient creating courses, but to redirect to a way of being significant for coaches, changing from a technocratic and institutionalized way to a relativistic view on the construction of their knowledge (Silva & Mesquita, 2016), with significant application for their training environment. In an allusion to constructivist theories, Stoszkowski & Collins (2014, p.776) point out that "learning happens best 'in context' people attend to challenges and problems in their own environment", a presupposition that reinforces the importance of learning in an informal context.

Coaches based their search for knowledge in their practical experiences (as a player or as a coach), however to rule your formation only in their experiences take some risks because they can be only reproducing some activities without reflection about their practicing. It is important to offer for coaches some courses to promote the reflection about their experiences, which may reduce only the reproduction of past experiences (Feu Molina et al., 2012) and become a more expressive learning environment.

Due to the lack of systematization of relevant contents by CBHb and FPHb, coaches seek knowledge mainly in the informal context (unrelated to these Institutions), guided by their daily experiences and needs, in materials available on the internet to update different concepts and apply in their teams. This result agrees with the findings of Milistetd et al. (2016), who point out that CBHb offers a low course load for coaches when compared with other Confederations, perhaps because it depends on the demand of State Federations, and does not have a defined program or long-term investment (Musa et al., 2017). When reporting to FPHb, coaches reported that most courses offered refer to refereeing, which does not respond to their wishes (as in topics about physical, technical and tactical training). It reinforces the distance between coaches' learning and these institutions, who could actively participate in mediation and reflection on specific knowledge.

We observe isolated and disconnected activities of these Institutions, which do not respond to the anxieties of the coaches and do not guarantee the continuity of learning. It is suggested to invest in activities that ensure the continuity of the different themes, as well as provide reflection on the aspects to be developed with the teams considering their training environment.

A possibility is pointed out in CSD1 and CSD2, when mentioning the need to create a 'formal coaching education program', mainly focusing on the gaps perceived by them during their learning process (in the University and/or outside of it), and that in a systematic way could be filled up with developed activities by the CBHb and the FPHb. However, the professional development from the activities of a possible 'formal coaching education program' should consider the complexity of the training environment, as well as promote reflection on the dynamics and demands of the teams. Werthner & Trudel (2006) pointed out that coaches value their daily experiences in the work environment even more than they expected certification programs to be considered the most important by these trainers. This fact makes even more significant a learning approach that recognizes and considers the coaches' environment, reinforcing the role of the formal and informal context throughout the coaching process.

The University has a general learning role in Brazil (when considering coaches' development) (Brasil, 2004), which does not allow the student to become a coach immediately (Milistetd et al., 2016). This scenario presents the important gap in which the activities of CBHb and FPHb can be developed, considering the three learning contexts, from mediated and unmediated situations. Another possibility is to bring these institutions closer to the universities, to promote joint activities in undergraduate courses as an optional element of the curriculum.

Nelson et al. (2006) report that the formal learning context presents few opportunities that integrate the new knowledge with coaches' practice, mainly by the curricular structure privileging aspects related to 'bio-scientific' disciplines. On the other hand, in the CSD1 and CSD2 activities related to the non-formal context also seem to be decontextualized and not applicable to their work environments, which would justify the approximation between these Institutions and the Universities.

In CSD2 the coaches also pointed out possible activities that would contribute to their professional learning. These include expanding camps, structuring regional and state teams (of different ages), creating a 'formal coaching education program' and offering courses and other activities accessible to all coaches. Thus, coaches suggest a variety of possibilities concerning the three learning contexts.

One such activity is the CBHb camp for technical improvement of players. In 2017 the 'camps' are being regionalized to try to standardize the way of working in Brazilian territory (with online videos of the activities developed as warm-up, defensive systems and game situations) and to discover talents for National Teams (CBHb, 2017)².

However, in CSD2 the coaches mentioned that these camps are more attractive to the players than to the coaches, perhaps because of a possible absence of CBHb activity. CSD2 also criticizes the standardization of aspects related to the teaching of handball, mainly due to the territorial extension of Brazil and the working conditions in different teams of different environments. In this sense, there may be a decharacterization of the teams by the 'imposition' of another reality, disregarding the context for the coaches' learning and development (Musa et al., 2017; Silva & Mesquita, 2016).

Another activity promoted by CBHb is the 'mini-hand project', in which sports materials and handouts are provided to teams that have projects with U-12 teams and attend a satisfactory number of participants.

² <http://cbhb.com.br/especial.asp?contexto=30.01.03>

Coaches criticize that despite the provision of a handout, there is no exchange of experiences with their peers, which leads them to call it a "self-taught" learning. Milistetd et al. (2016) also highlight the lack of consistency and direction of the courses for coaches in Brazil, in which there is no consensus on the structuring and quantity of hours required. Thus, it is stated that there is no concern with the long-term coaches' learning, especially regarding the deepening of handball contents, and there is no structuring of the progression of skills that coaches must have at each stage of their learning process. And even with this possible hierarchy of concepts, it would be interesting to have close proximity to coaches' work environment, in order to make learning meaningful.

Coaches' standpoint on the formative role of CBHb and FPHb reveals the lack of support from these Institutions for the improvement of specific issues of handball and, consequently, the improvement of the teams of the Sao Paulo State. Due to a possible investment in the professional development of the coaches, it is suggested in CSD2 to organize competitions for the formation of regional and state selections of different age groups. This activity could promote the exchange of coaches and players and could increase learning possibilities in an informal context.

We consider important the creation of communities of practice more active in Sao Paulo State, mainly from activities promoted by the FPHb. The results revealed the importance that coaches attribute to their relationships with other protagonists, and understand learning as more than an accumulation of knowledge that disregards their experience.

The concern should not only focus on the technical domain of coaches, but on the ability to make decisions in their working environment, from the knowledge of different contexts and the interaction with different protagonists. Therefore, a collaborative construction of knowledge should be sought, and not imposed by coaches education programs (Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014).

Conclusion

Coaches' interviews revealed a great distance between their learning and the Institutions (FPHb and CBHb). Although there is an expectation and interest in learning specific aspects of handball, coaches understand that these institutions are no longer fulfilling their role.

On the other hand, it is noted that some of organized activities by these institutions are very distant from the environment in which coaches work. Thus, learning in courses and 'camps', for example, is not significant because they do not present transfers to their work environment.

It is suggested, then, that there be investment in activities by these Institutions that promote the debates for the development of handball and about the coaches' professional learning. Among the activities promoted should be prioritized aspects related to the work environment of the coaches, to make learning meaningful for them, as well as to provide some reflections of the context of the practice and the relationships between protagonists.

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